

## **FY 2004 Public Housing Agency 5-Year and Annual Plans**

### **Responses to Comments from the Resident Advisory Board**

#### **Section 2: Financial Resources**

Since there is no PHDEP grant, the RAB recommends that HCDCH continue to allocate money (approximately \$500,000) for crime and drug prevention activities from the Operating Subsidy. This will ensure that RSS has resources to continue programs and services like working with the tenant patrols and funding drug prevention programs.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH provide the RAB a budget outside of the Resident Services Section. This will empower the RAB to make more decisions independently from HCDCH.

#### **Section 3: PHA Policies Governing Eligibility, Selection, and Admissions**

The RAB recommends that the HCDCH keep the preference for homelessness as a priority. But HCDCH should also provide a definition for homelessness to avoid the situation where people claiming to be homeless, go to IHS for the night, and get to move up on the wait list and which takes into account those who are homeless due to circumstances beyond their control. The policy should also be sure that it checks the homeless status of both heads of households to avoid allowing people who were kicked out of public housing to be allowed back in under another family member's name.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH ensure that Managers are implementing programs consistently across all management units. For example, why have some projects not implemented the Community Service Requirement yet? This will help ensure that all residents are treated fairly and reduces mistrust of managers.

#### **Section 4: Rent Determination Policies**

The RAB recommends that HCDCH continue to provide information to residents on the hardship rent exemption policies at the time of annual re-exam and through regular flyers, newsletters, and the monthly rent statement. HCDCH should work to educate resident associations on the hardship exemption so that they can also help improve communication and inform their communities. Finally, HCDCH should establish a committee which includes residents to determine whether there are any discretionary policies that should be established.

#### **Section 5: Operations and Management Policies**

No recommendations.

## **Section 6: Grievance Procedures**

The RAB recommends that the HCDCH write the grievance procedures in plain and various language for use by the residents. This will help ensure that all residents understand the procedures. A simple step-by-step guide to accompany the current procedures would be more helpful and useful for residents.

## **Section 7: Capital Improvement Needs**

The RAB commented that the HCDCH always asks for funds first then talks to the RAB. The RAB recommends that HCDCH get input from residents regarding capital improvement needs even before projects are selected for renovations. This way residents are part of the planning process from the beginning rather than just a “rubber stamp” after projects are chosen.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH establish a committee that would include a resident representative who has resided at the project at least 2 years to provide suggestions during the design phase and conduct inspections during construction. This way residents are part of the planning process from the beginning and can double check whether their suggestions were implemented.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH train residents to sit on a selection committee for contractors and consultants. Residents should be part of the planning process from the beginning and have input.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH create a system to update residents on construction activities and provide progress reports. For example, when there is a delay in construction such as at Waimaha, residents are not told what is going on and when they can expect to move back in a timely manner. Also, HCDCH should find a way to keep contractors who do a bad job from getting future jobs.

## **Section 8: Demolition and Disposition**

No recommendations.

## **Section 9: Designation of Housing**

The RAB does not support the segregation of physically disabled people from family projects. Those with disabilities should be allowed to choose where they want to live just like any other family.

The RAB supports the designation of elderly housing just for elderly people. Sometimes the mentally disabled people cause problems for the elderly and they do not feel safe in their projects. The RAB recommends that HCDCH consider having some projects that are just for elderly people. However, elderly people should also be allowed to live in family projects if they choose – some would like to be near their children and friends.

## **Section 10: Conversions of Public Housing**

No recommendations.

### **Section 11: Homeownership**

No recommendations.

### **Section 12: Community Service Programs**

The RAB recommends that HCDCH provide deprogrammed units or reasonable and adequate office space for resident association activities. This will help associations to conduct official association business and ensure that HCDCH comply with the requirements of 24 CFR 964 regarding resident participation.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH continue the FSS program for families in section 8. It is a wonderful program and residents who are in the program are receiving much benefit from the case management plan. The RAB also recommends that HCDCH expand the public housing FSS program for more participants to take advantage of the program's benefits.

### **Section 13: Crime and Safety**

The RAB recommends that HCDCH establish a system for Managers to follow-up on reports of crime from HPD or residents. This system would provide follow-up to residents so that they know what action was taken in response to their report or complaint.

### **Attachment E: Community Service Requirement**

The RAB recommends that HCDCH work with resident associations to create programs such as the Neighbor to Neighbor Care program.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH change the name of the Community Service Program to be more positive like the "Up-lift program" or to think of a Hawaiian name for the program like the one used for the Tenant Patrol Conference. A more positive name would help create a more positive feeling when residents participate in the program.

The RAB recommends that HCDCH hire a third party to implement the Community Service Requirement. The RAB feels this will help ensure that the program is applied consistently and fairly across all projects. Also, the third party could provide referrals for volunteer activities and training programs to residents.

### **Attachment F: Pet Policy**

The RAB recommends that HCDCH implement the Pet Policy across all management units. Some projects are currently allowing pets and others are not and this is creating conflict between residents and their managers.